

# Memo

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**cc:** Department Heads  
**From:** Pat MacQueen, City Manager  
**Date:** February 20, 2012  
**Re:** Manager's Report

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## **Local Recognition**

Sylvia Poulin has been deservedly recognized with WMUR's and Citizens Bank's "Heart of your City" award for all her great efforts on behalf of downtown Berlin and the whole community. As a result, she was showcased and profiled on WMUR's Chronicle show which people all over the State got to see and enjoy. Berlin needs to bottle her energy, drive and devotion to her community.

On Thursday evening I attended the Awards Ceremony in Bedford where Cathy Conway of NCIC was recognized as one of this year's 10 Outstanding Women in Business in New Hampshire by the NH Business Review's annual award. This award goes to 10 women each year in NH who have made outstanding contributions to their businesses and their communities. Cathy has easily met this standard. Working for NCIC she has quietly led many efforts to improve all of the North Country. Specifically in Berlin in the early 2000's she was very instrumental in helping us getting the City's housing effort going and obtained the original grant which helped us get the City's Housing Office established and operating.

## **Tissue Resurgence**

Attached is an article from the Wall Street Journal of 2-16-12 on the resurgence of papers mills such as the Gorham Cascade Mill on the continuing growth of tissue

demand throughout the world which according to Mill Manager Willis Blevins is mostly because tissue paper is not easily replaced by the digital media as other paper is.

### **Budget Meetings with Departments**

Meetings with City Departments have been held over the last week to review the budget requests. It certainly looks like this year's budget matters will be every bit as interesting as they have been for the past several years.

### **BEMS Annual Report**

Attached is a copy of the Berlin Emergency Medical Service Annual Report which gives a pretty good feel for the service which the City receives for emergency ambulance service in a year to year contract. The current contract with BEMS will expire in June of 2013. The BEMS annual audit is available in the office for anyone who might like to see it.

### **Friday Telephone Outage**

We had thought that the building of a second telephone line through Pinkham Notch was going to eliminate the problem of the City losing telephone service when an accident occurs on Rt. #2 as it did several years and as it did on Friday afternoon. Apparently a logging truck took out some fiber lines on Rt 2 in Jefferson cutting phone service Needless to say this type of outage can cause significant communication problems for the hospital, businesses and emergency services. We haven't yet found out from the providers why this occurred since the new second line through Pinkham Notch has been completed.

### **Legislative Issues**

Pole Tax Exemption – HB 1305 Happily, the Fairpoint bill to exempt their poles and conduits from property taxes was solidly defeated in the house with the strong support of Berlin's delegation despite a 13-1 committee recommendation in favor of the bill. This is the third year in a row that the House has killed the effort to reinstate this special interest Fairpoint bill which does nothing but exempt Fairpoint from property taxes which no one else is exempt from. The Council has been solid in opposing this exemption and has regularly made its position known to the delegation.

Testimony on HB 1604 The Municipal and County Government Committee on a vote of 14-3 has recommended at Inexpedient to Legislate this bill which would reduce interest rates on delinquent taxes from 12% and 18% to 6% and 9%. Hopefully the same will happen with the full House.